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mis sensibus, nos sagacitate canum, ad utilitatem nostram abutimur: nos e terræ cavernis ferrum elicimus, rem ad colendos agros necessariam: nos æris, argenti, auri venas, penitus abditas, invenimus, et ad usum aptas, et ad ornatum decoras: arborum autem consectione, omnique materia, et culta, et silvestri, partim ad calefaciendum corpus, igni abhibito, et ad mitigandum cibum utimur: partim ad ædificandum, ut tectis septi, frigora caloresque pellamus. Magnos vero usus affert ad navigia facienda, quorum cursibus suppeditantur omnes undique ad vitam copię; quasque res violentissimas natura genuit, earum moderationem nos soli habemus, maris, atque ventorum, propter nauticarum rerum scientiam: plurimisque maritimis rebus fruimur, atque utimur. Terrenorum item commodorum omnis est in homine dominatus. Nos campis, nos montibus fruimur: nostri sunt amnes, nostri lacus: nos fruges serimus, nos arbores: nos aquarum inductionibus terris fecunditatem damus; nos flumina arcemus, dirigimus, avertimus; nostris denique manibus in rerum natura quasi alteram naturam efficere conamur.'

ART. XI.—*Military Academy.*

Reports of the Boards of Visitors of the Military Academy at West Point, in June, 1830, and June, 1831.

Those who have been accustomed to observe the progress, and reflect upon the tendency of our institutions, have doubtless remarked the rapid progress of the Military Academy at West Point in the public estimation; nor can they have failed to notice the important position which it now occupies, among those objects that ought to be well understood by all who pretend to a knowledge of our national policy, and of the means by which that policy can best be cherished and sustained.

The comprehensive mind of Washington first suggested the necessity of an establishment, where a portion of our youth might be constantly employed in acquiring such fundamental principles of knowledge, as are generally esteemed indispensable for the attainment of much proficiency in the science of modern warfare. The views of Mr. Adams were in harmony with those of General Washington on this subject, but circumstances prevented their consummation during the administration of either; nor was this finally accomplished, until Mr. Jefferson was placed at the head of the Government. Under his fostering care, this noble seminary was first organized, though on a

plan differing considerably from the existing one, and much more limited in its objects and operations. Since its establishment, through the influence of various changes and modifications, introduced by Congress, and those who have the more immediate direction of its concerns, it has risen with a steady and rapid progress to its present flourishing condition. Until within the last few years, however, it has not much engaged the public attention ; but the constant and zealous assiduity of those charged with its management, has now placed it on an eminence, where it must infallibly attract the public gaze, and receive decided condemnation or applause. We feel, however, very little apprehension for the result of this scrutiny ; for the indications of warm approbation and cordial support have been so numerous and unequivocal, as to leave little doubt, that it will continue to be sustained and cherished by Government and the people.

But however great and obvious the utility of this establishment may appear to those who know it well, there are others, of great intelligence and respectability, who, from ignorance of its true character, regard its progress with an unfavorable eye. It is to such persons, that our observations will be chiefly addressed, while we endeavor briefly to examine a few of the principal objections that have been made to the Military Academy, and, if possible, to remove some of the obstructions, that tend to impede its progress in the public favor. We shall, also, in the course of our remarks, take occasion to refer to some leading points in the present system of instruction, and to suggest, for the consideration of those more immediately concerned, a few alterations, which appear to us to be necessary for the more complete attainment of the ends proposed by the friends and supporters of the institution. In performing this task, we propose, instead of making a separate statement of the objections which occur to us, and attempting to give to each a formal answer, to offer our ideas in a more general form ; hoping, that we shall be able, in this manner, to give to every material point, a full and satisfactory examination.

The following extract from the Report of the Board of Visitors for 1830, explains the general objects of the West Point Academy.

‘ We consider, then, that this Academy is expected to furnish to the army a supply of efficient officers ; to the militia, an intermixture of well trained citizens, qualified, on emergency, to dis-

cipline that last and best arm of republics ; to internal improvement a corps of engineers, capable of giving wholesome direction to the spirit of enterprise which pervades our country. It ought to furnish science for exploring the hidden treasures of our mountains, and ameliorating the agriculture of our valleys ; nor is it upon inert matter alone, that it ought to exercise a vivifying influence. Inheriting from our varied ancestry the discordant characteristics of every people on the globe, it yet remains to form a specific and all-pervading character for the American nation ; nor do we conceive any surer method of stamping upon the yet glowing wax a more majestic form, than by sending into every district, young men, emphatically the children of our country, trained to the manly exercise of arms, and imbued with the tastes of science and literature ; instructed in the principles and action of our political system, and the living exemplar, from which sound education may rear the social edifice.'

This, we think, is a tolerably fair statement of what is expected of our National Military School ; and perhaps it will be well, in this place, to take a cursory view of the subjects embraced in its course of study, in order that we may ascertain how far these expectations will be likely to be realized.

The first year is devoted entirely to the French language and Mathematics, in each of which there is a daily recitation. During the second year, Mathematical studies are attended to every day, and French three times a week, the other days of each week being partially devoted to copying with crayon models of the human figure. The Mathematical and French courses are completed in the two first years. The Mathematical course consists of Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Surveying, Descriptive Geometry, the principles of Shades and Shadows and Perspective, Analytical Geometry, Conic Sections, and the Integral and Differential Calculus. These subjects are all pursued assiduously, and to a considerable extent, and occupy about three fourths of the student's time for two years. Many are of opinion, that the Mathematical department is made to engage too much of the cadet's attention ; and this opinion was adopted by the Board of Visitors for 1830, from whose report we extract the following paragraph.

' This, (Mathematics,) appears to us a pursuit of somewhat all-engrossing character. To a certain extent, Mathematics are indispensable, and must occupy much time ; but, beyond that universal test, utility, we think they ought to give place to studies of equal importance.'

Whether this opinion is well founded, is perhaps questionable. Some portions of the Mathematical course are undoubtedly not very essential to a strictly military education, nor for those who are in pursuit of merely general knowledge; but to one who desires a full acquaintance with scientific subjects, the whole is not only useful, but indispensable. One object of the Military Academy, independently of the chief one, ought certainly to be the encouragement and promotion of what are commonly called the exact sciences; and there is no other institution in our country, where so thorough a foundation can be laid for the attainment of eminence in these departments of learning. If the value of this advantage be duly appreciated, may we not reasonably hope, that, hereafter, some Newton, Davy, or La Place,—some Franklin, Bowditch, or Fulton, will rise from this cradle of science to ameliorate and elevate the condition of man, and thereby repay to the country, with abundant interest, the small pittance it bestows? Considerations of this nature plead strongly in favor of continuing the present system; yet, on the whole, we think it may well be doubted, whether, while the term of study is limited to four years, some portion of the second year which is now given to Mathematics, might not, with more profit, be devoted to other pursuits. The Mathematical course might be considerably curtailed, and there would still be left enough to keep the advantages of this school far above those afforded by our colleges, and at the same time to comprehend every thing requisite for the education of a military man. One reason for introducing French into the course of studies, independently of the consideration, that every well-educated young man ought to be acquainted with that language, is to enable the cadets to read French works with facility, many of their text-books being the productions of French authors. It is, we believe, the universal opinion of scientific men, that French writers have been much more successful and happy in their investigations and explanations of the sciences generally, and of that of war in particular, than those of any other nation. It is both an evidence and an effect of this opinion, that a large portion of the works on scientific and military subjects, contained in the library at West Point, are the productions of French authors; and the cadets derive great benefit from this collection, by means of the explanations and

illustrations given by the professors, who are, of course, familiar with these authorities.

The third year is devoted to the various branches of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry, and to the completion of the course of Drawing. The afternoons of about half of this year are employed in copying sketches of landscapes, etc. with the lead pencil, and the remainder in copying topographical drawings with the pen and hair-pencil. The Board of Visitors for 1831, in alluding to this subject in their Report, use the following language :

‘ In Drawing, the cadets of the second and third classes have made surprising progress. In topography, landscapes, and the delineation of the human figure, their performances are excellent, and in a high degree creditable to themselves and to the accomplished artist from whom they have received their instructions.’

The Board of Visitors for 1830, in reference to the same subject, say :

‘ An astonishing proficiency in Drawing, proves that no ordinary praise is due to that department ; but its character is entirely civil, and confined to the imitation of pictures and models. Is it not essential that military surveyors should be accustomed to sketch nature readily and accurately ?’

It should be observed, that three afternoons of each week in the second year, as well as all the afternoons during half of the third year, are employed in copying, with crayon and the lead pencil, from models of the human figure, landscapes, &c. The principal object of this is said to be, to prepare the student for entering with advantage upon the subject of topographical drawing ; but we are inclined to doubt, whether enough is gained by this preparatory course, to compensate for the time consumed by it. If crayon-drawing, which engages so very large a portion of the cadet’s attention, were dispensed with, and the time now devoted to pencil-drawing principally given to learning to sketch from nature, instead of copying from painted landscapes, we conceive that the cadets would acquire a more complete knowledge of topography, than they can be expected to obtain under the present arrangement ; and the time devoted to crayon-drawing might, as it seems to us, be more profitably employed in attention to some other branch of study.

Topography is a highly useful part of a military education ; and it is especially necessary that it should be well attended to

in this country, where few persons are now very conversant with the subject. But to be a good military topographer, supposes the ability to 'sketch nature readily and accurately;' and the neglect of this art at West Point is very justly criticised by the Board of Visitors for 1830.

Thus far, every thing is but preliminary. The main object of the institution is to qualify the pupil for the performance of all the duties of a military life; and by way of preparation, he is carefully disciplined in the various duties of a soldier and officer, from the handling of a musket, to the commanding of armies. The use of the various instruments of attack and defence; the construction of military works, both permanent and temporary, and the most approved methods of attacking and defending these works; the manner of conducting the marches of armies, and of disposing of the different arms, with a view to their mutual protection and assistance in cases of emergency; minor tactics, or the evolutions of troops, whether in small or large numbers; and the more complicated and exalted principles of grand tactics, or *strategy*, are each in turn carefully attended to, so far as theory and the lessons of experience extend.

Besides these military subjects, studies of a different nature are made to engage a large portion of the pupil's attention during the last year. Civil engineering, in its multifarious departments, viz. the construction of roads, canals, bridges, and rail-roads, together with the elements of carpentry and architecture, holds an important rank. As architecture is becoming daily more interesting to the public at large, its encouragement and advancement cannot be too strongly recommended. A deficiency of taste and information upon this subject is but too evident in many parts of our country; and any institution, which tends to diffuse the correct and chaste principles of this art, deserves to be cherished and encouraged. A fine collection of casts, representing the most celebrated buildings of antiquity, has recently been procured from France for the Military Academy; and there is every reason to hope, that it will tend materially to improve the department of architecture.

The studies that have now been enumerated, together with rhetoric and national and constitutional law, embrace the chief objects of attention at this institution. A cursory glance at this course of instruction will be sufficient to con-

vince the observer, that it comprehends much useful information. Yet there are many, who profess to believe the Academy not only useless, but absolutely injurious in its effect upon the public interests. They maintain, that genius and courage alone are enough to ensure distinction in the military profession. They say, that all our citizens are soldiers, and that competent officers can be selected from among them, whenever military services are necessary ; and they, doubtless, honestly believe, that to become an able officer is not a very difficult matter. But, with due respect for the sincerity of these opinions, we must confess our preference for the doctrine of our illustrious Hamilton ; who says, that ‘ war, like most other things, is a science to be acquired and perfected by diligence, by perseverance, by time and by practice.’ These few words, coming as they do from a statesman of acknowledged genius and wisdom, are entitled to the most respectful and deliberate attention. That great man had investigated with the most keen and discerning scrutiny, the many and complicated causes of national grandeur and infirmity. He had especially weighed the mighty causes, which had elevated, sustained, and overthrown the various contrivances of men for self-government ; and he was of the unqualified opinion, that a national military establishment was indispensable to our peace and security. The reasons which led him to this conclusion are, doubtless, familiar to most of our readers,* and still operate with undiminished influence. All, however, must acknowledge, that a military establishment without skilful officers, would be about as inefficient as powder and bullets without a gun, or a vessel without helm or compass. But how is this skill to be ‘ acquired and perfected ?’ Doubtless, ‘ by diligence, by perseverance, by time, and by practice.’ These objectors should hesitate, before they destroy one of the most useful instruments by which this benefit is to be secured.

Such an instrument is the Military Academy. Before they attempt to subvert so noble an edifice, they should reflect, that it is not always wise to suffer speculation to prevail over experience. They should remember the consequences, which have heretofore resulted from the want of military science and skill, before they labor to expose us anew to similar evils. They ought not to forget, that nations, as well as individuals, are liable to be overwhelmed by adverse events, whose approaches

* See *Federalist*, Nos. 24 to 28.

cannot be foreseen, or guarded against by any sudden exertion of art or power ; that a hitherto unknown responsibility rests upon the citizens of this republic, an obligation greater than ever was imposed upon any other political society ; and that we ought, at least, to pause, before we divest ourselves of any of those securities, upon which the peace, the progress, and the stability of our institutions may depend.

One objection, which has frequently been urged against this institution is, that it is used as a mere engine of favoritism, for the benefit of the wealthy and influential ; and many who highly approve the policy of maintaining a National Military School, are hostile to the existing one, in consequence of this supposed partiality in the appointment of cadets. Now, nothing can be more unjust or unsubstantial than this objection. It is unnecessary to waste words upon it, for the inspection of a single document will exhibit it in its true light, and prove it to be wholly groundless. Those who wish fully to satisfy themselves upon this point, can do so by referring to a paper published in the spring of 1830, by order of Congress, containing the names and parentage of all, who have ever been members of the Academy.

There are some who maintain, that the sons of rich men should be wholly excluded, and that those of the indigent only, who are destitute of the ordinary means of education, should be admitted into the Military Academy. They have evidently come to this conclusion, without sufficiently considering the effect of such an eleemosynary establishment. It would invest the indigent of the community exclusively, with the most unlimited power over liberty and property in times of danger ; and, although, under such a system, there might be no want of fidelity and patriotism, is it probable that the same interest would be felt, either for, or by the army, or the same confidence inspired by it, as if the officers were taken indiscriminately from all classes of society ? Certainly not. The spirit of our institutions is decidedly in favor of placing, as far as practicable, persons of all ranks in those stations which they are qualified to fill. In this way, only, can we provide for the preservation of republican principles, and the stability and harmony of the Union. If none but the sons of the wealthy and influential were appointed cadets, we should be among the first to object to such partiality : if none but the sons of the poor and obscure, we should be just as ready to enter our

protest against it. But we are persuaded, that neither principle prevails in their selection, and think that a moment's attention to the rules of appointment will convince the reader, that our opinion is well founded. The number of cadets is limited by law to two hundred and sixty ; and every State is entitled to have one cadet always at the Academy, from each of its congressional districts. The aggregate of the quotas of the several States being but two hundred and thirteen, there remain more than forty vacancies, which are usually filled by young gentlemen from the territories and District of Columbia ; by sons of officers of the army and navy ; and other persons selected by the President and Secretary of War. The most fastidious could hardly imagine a more equitable method of selection ; but as there are always many more applicants than vacancies, it of necessity follows, that where one is gratified, several are disappointed. The Secretary of War has doubtless a delicate and sometimes exceedingly unpleasant duty to discharge, in making a selection from the multitude of candidates. As a general rule, however, it is believed that he is governed by the wishes of the representatives in Congress from the particular State, to which the applicant belongs. This system of appointment is as free from objection as any that could be adopted, and ought to give universal satisfaction. It is, indeed, sometimes made a subject of complaint, that citizens are precluded, under the present system, from receiving commissions in the army ; but we trust that enough has already been said, to show that a preparatory course of study, such as citizens have not generally an opportunity of pursuing, is indispensable ; and as, moreover, the cadets who are sent to West Point are selected according to an equitable rule from the mass of citizens, we are at a loss to perceive, why this is not in fact a virtual compliance with the principle in question.

We come now to the consideration of another objection ; which is, that young men, after having been educated at the national expense, often resign their commissions in the army. Those who make this objection contend, that no one should be admitted to the Academy, who does not intend permanently to pursue the military profession. This we cannot admit. We are persuaded, that it would be very advantageous to the country to educate even a considerably larger number than is required by the immediate necessities of the army, and not only to permit those who choose to resign, but

even to refuse to commission any more of the graduates than the service absolutely demands, leaving the remainder to pursue whatever calling suits them best. Suppose, for example, that fifty should be graduated annually, and only twenty be required for the army. We would retain twenty in the service, and discharge the others. We would not, however, as a matter of course, retain the *first twenty* of each class, as they are arranged at the Academy according to their comparative proficiency; but we would have each State and territory proportionately represented; and this proportionate representation might be secured by the observance of the following rules.—Let one be commissioned from each of the twenty largest States, provided the graduating class contains one from each of those States, who is desirous of entering the army; but if not, then let the selection be made from other States in succession. If several from the same State should be candidates for a commission, let it be given to him who is most distinguished as a scholar. When it becomes necessary to commission twenty more, let them be selected according to the same rule, from the remaining States, the District of Columbia, and the territories. Let this principle be observed from year to year, extending equal privileges to every State. When a number shall have been commissioned from any State, equal to the number of its representatives in Congress, let the graduates belonging to that State be precluded from receiving commissions, till all the other States and territories are represented in the same ratio. As the army has now its full complement of officers, it becomes a matter of some importance to determine what disposition shall hereafter be made of the graduates of the Military Academy, or what modification of that institution circumstances may render it necessary to adopt. Either the number of cadets must be very much reduced, or provision must be made for an increase of the army, or some arrangement like the one here proposed must be adopted. After much reflection upon the subject, we do not hesitate to express the opinion, that a reduction of the number of cadets would be extremely injudicious. There are on an average about forty who annually leave the Academy; and if the system should be adopted, of commissioning each year as many as are required for the immediate necessities of the service, and of discharging the others, after having given them diplomas as testimonials of their character and standing,

we doubt not, that the individuals thus discharged would do vastly more to advance the real objects of the Military School, than they could possibly do by being retained in the service. They would enter upon civil life, not only well qualified for its ordinary pursuits, but with the possession of that military knowledge, which it is the purpose of the National Academy to disseminate. In a few years there would be several of these graduates in every State, who would aid greatly in establishing a uniform system of discipline throughout the militia of the different parts of the country. If so desirable a result could be obtained so easily, we should have abundant cause to rejoice. The present militia system is generally allowed to be a very defective one. As respects discipline, or any important knowledge of military matters, they are wholly out of the question, and must ever remain so, as long as the subject excites so little attention. One valuable end, and only one, is now attained, that of ascertaining the effective numbers of armed men in the country. But this might be done at a vastly less expense of time, money, industry, and morals. Relying as we now do upon the militia as our chief security against foreign invasion and domestic convulsions, it behoves every one to lend his zealous efforts to raise it from its present comparatively impotent condition, and to give it an efficient and useful organization. The necessity of some change is apparent to all ; but the difficulty is, to ascertain the means, by which it may best be accomplished. It is much to be regretted, that, although the subject has been earnestly recommended to the attention of Congress, that body has not yet given to it the consideration, which its importance obviously demands. It is only by means of officers instructed in military affairs, that we can ever hope to reduce to any thing like discipline, the present unwieldy mass of our militia ; but with the assistance of such officers, large levies of recruits might in a little time be prepared for efficient service in the field.

Every one is aware of the importance of military science in the conduct of warlike operations ; and the cultivation of that science is, as we have already remarked, the prominent object of the West Point Academy. With the assistance which the graduates would be capable of rendering, might we not reasonably hope, that in a few years, with a moderate degree of attention to the subject, the officers of the militia throughout the country would become familiar with a uniform system of

tactics, which would always enable them, in cases of emergency, to act effectively together? In this way, raw troops might soon be disciplined, and an army of efficient men brought into the field in a far shorter time, than can possibly be hoped for now. Unless some measures are soon adopted to give more vigor to our militia, it will become necessary to increase to a considerable extent the force of our regular army, or we may be destined again to hear of those scenes of desolation and horror, that have so recently spread sorrow and dismay through a portion of our land.

Our regular military force is, and has for some years been, reduced to the smallest possible limit. It is but a mere fragment, scattered in small detachments over an immense frontier; and has hitherto been found scarcely sufficient to preserve our munitions, and impose a salutary check upon the numerous tribes of Indians on our Western borders. A large standing army has no advocates among us, and is wholly adverse to the spirit of our Government and to public sentiment. But it would be equally adverse to the dictates of justice and humanity, so to curtail its limits, as to leave it entirely inadequate to the performance of its duties. Whether the symptoms of disaffection that have at various times appeared among our black and red inhabitants, or whether the rapid augmentation of our wealth and population, and the consequent increase of the number of important military positions, require or would justify an increase of our army, are questions, which do not properly fall within the immediate purpose of this article; and we leave them to the consideration of our statesmen and legislators.

We trust that enough has already been said to prove the great utility of the West Point Academy, in the education of officers suitable for the army, and in disseminating correct military information through the country. It has also, we hope, been made to appear, that the sciences and arts are likely to be advanced in time by the same means. We now ask the attention of the reader to another of the benefits, which the public will derive from this Academy. We mean the aid which it gives, in perfecting the system of internal improvements. The extensive works in progress or in contemplation in various parts of our country, require a far greater number of skilful civil engineers, than can now be readily obtained. This demand will continue to increase for many years to come; and there is no school in the country, where the knowledge

necessary to satisfy it can be acquired so well, as at this institution.

It is well known, that a number of gentlemen, distinguished for political and scientific attainments, are annually invited to attend the public examination at West Point, and to make a detailed report of their impressions concerning the institution, to the Secretary of War ; and the opinions of these visitors, for the last few years, as exhibited by their reports, bear the most ample testimony to its utility and excellence. The reports of the Boards of Visitors for 1830 and 1831, are full of almost unqualified encomium ; and the other reports, for several years past, are scarcely less favorable. What higher or more honorable evidence in its favor, can be expected or desired ? And yet, we regret to see, that there are those, who would impair its usefulness, by detracting from its well earned fame. Of this class is the author of a pamphlet, published at Washington, in the winter of 1829—1830, under the signature of ‘*Americanus*.’ This writer altogether denies the utility of the Academy, as it is now conducted ; condemns the course of those intrusted with its management ; and pronounces the education given to its graduates wholly unsuited to the ends proposed. His pamphlet is strongly tinged with prejudice ; his assertions are, in many instances, notoriously unfounded ; and his reflections upon particular individuals, are rather too indicative of disappointed ambition and personal resentment. The candid reader, in comparing the assertions of ‘*Americanus*’ with the language of the reports above alluded to, will doubtless form a fair estimate of the merits and justice of the former ; and we take our leave of him, with a simple expression of our regret, that his eagerness to gratify any personal feelings should have hurried him so far beyond the limits of prudence and propriety.

Those who have never visited this school, can form only an inadequate idea of the manner in which it is conducted ; but of the multitudes who have, few, we are persuaded, have ever left it with other than friendly feelings. It has often happened, that persons going there with strong prejudices against it, have found reason to alter their opinions, and have frankly acknowledged their previous misconception of its character. There, assembled on terms of the most perfect equality, is a large number of young men, from every quarter of the country, and from all classes of society. Wealth, so often in other stations the

criterion of worth, is there deprived of its baneful influence over the youthful mind ; which, animated by a salutary discipline, strives with generous and ardent emulation for a nobler prize. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, are clad with the same garments, fed at the same board, and subjected to the same discipline. Artificial distinction, with its unsubstantial appendages, avails nothing in the contest for intellectual superiority. We doubt whether our boasted principle of equality is any where more completely exemplified or more carefully cherished ; the only aristocracy which is known there, is that of intellect and character ; and honors are awarded only, where the title to them has been fairly earned by diligence and merit. Such a system of instruction forcibly teaches the young mind, that intellectual wealth has no exclusive proprietors ; and that men's deserts are to be measured, not by gold and genealogy, but by genius and moral worth. By the free and familiar association of persons from every portion of our country, the asperities of sectional jealousy are smoothed away. It is, indeed, no rare occurrence, for young men, whose homes are most widely separated, to contract at this school attachments of the warmest and most enduring character. It is situated, as is well known, on one of the most romantic spots on the banks of the beautiful Hudson ; and its seclusion, together with the wholesome effects of rigid but well regulated discipline, combine to render it almost unrivalled, as a place for study and improvement. Whatever is most conducive to corporeal vigor and elasticity of mind ; whatever is calculated to create or cultivate independence and decision of character ; and whatever has a tendency to nourish noble and generous sentiments, are concentrated in this lovely region. We may not immediately experience all the benefits of this admirable school, but time will continue to develope them more and more. Its interests, in the mean time, ought to be guarded with careful solicitude, especially from the assaults of ignorance and malignity.

We are bound to express our conviction, however, that although much which is highly useful is now undoubtedly acquired by the pupil, much more is requisite to give a proper finish to his elementary attainments. To become an accomplished officer of either the army or navy, requires not only minute professional skill, but an acquaintance with all subjects commonly embraced in a polite education. It is the duty of

those who have the direction of early studies, to point out with careful and considerate attention, all the paths that lead to excellence; but he who wins the prize, must be indebted for success to his own diligent and judicious exertions. At West Point, the youthful mind, untaught by experience, and in a great measure excluded from the beneficial influence of an association with those of more advanced age and experience, does not readily appreciate the value of that general information, which is deemed of the first importance in all refined society; and in consequence of this, it too often happens, that graduates, who have entered the Academy at an early age, find themselves, on mingling with the world, greatly deficient in much of that knowledge which ought to be deemed indispensable in every *élève* of our national seminary. Our impression may be erroneous; we hope it is so; but if it be well founded, the fault is not so much with the pupil, as with those who have the charge of his instruction. Perhaps the term of four years is not enough to accomplish all that is desirable; and if it is not, the period of study should be extended so far, as to give the students time enough to attend to the outlines at least, of civil, natural, and military history, and the elements of geography, political economy, and literature in general; all of which are now almost wholly if not entirely neglected. Some knowledge of these subjects is certainly indispensable to a finished education. Any considerable progress in them can only be effected by time and continued exertion; but the outlines of each and their general utility, should be pointed out and illustrated, in every well regulated system of instruction. History is a subject of far greater importance in this view, than is apt to be supposed by the superficial thinker. To the military man, it is of the last importance. Bolingbroke, in drawing a parallel between Lucullus and Marlborough, makes the following forcible remarks:

‘The Roman had on his side, genius and experience, cultivated by study; the Briton had genius improved by experience, and no more. The first, therefore, is not an example of what study can do alone; but the latter is an example of what genius and experience can do without study. They can do much, to be sure, when the first is given in a superior degree; but such examples are very rare; and when they happen, it will be still true, that they would have had fewer blemishes, and would have come nearer to the perfection of private and public virtue, in all the

arts of peace and achievements of war, if the views of such men had been enlarged, and their sentiments ennobled, by acquiring that cast of thought, and that temper of mind, which will grow up and become habitual in every man, who applies himself early to the study of history, as to the study of philosophy, with the intention of being wiser and better, without the affectation of being more learned.'

Why then, is the study of history totally neglected at a school, where the professed object is to render the pupils accomplished military men? Were the term of study at West Point made five, instead of four years, there would be time enough to attend to all the subjects that we have mentioned, and perhaps to other useful ones, that now receive no attention.

It appears to us, that it would be a decided improvement in the present system, to introduce to a considerable extent, the exegetical method of instruction, especially if those subjects to which we have referred, should be added to the list of studies. The exegetical, if judiciously combined with the existing method, would probably render the system of instruction at West Point much more thorough, than that of any of our other institutions.

As this Academy is a national institution, and one, respecting which considerable interest is beginning to be felt, we should, perhaps, be justified, in laying before the public a much more minute account of its affairs, than we have here attempted; but we trust that what we have said is sufficient to show that its defects, when contrasted with its merits, are but as the glimmering of a taper to the brightness of the sun. In comparing its present condition with its situation ten or twelve years since, we are forcibly impressed with the rapid improvement that has already been made. Our observations upon it have been rapid and general, being only intended as a hasty commentary on the existing organization of a noble institution, which, we believe, we shall ere long behold complete in majesty and strength; and we hope that the time is not far distant, when it will become a model to all others of a similar character, and an imperishable monument of the wisdom of its founders.